



Association for the Blind &  
Visually Impaired Charleston™

**For Immediate Release**

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**J M Smith Foundation Awards \$24,000 to the  
Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired – Charleston**

*Grant to Fund Six Vision Clinics Serving Charleston County Head Start and Child  
Development Children*

**Charleston, SC** – The Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired – Charleston (ABVI) is pleased to announce it has received a \$24,000 grant from the J M Smith Foundation to provide funding for its *Focus on Children* program. The grant covers vision clinics for preschool-aged children at six Charleston County elementary schools.

Through *Focus on Children*, ABVI provides free vision screenings, comprehensive eye exams, prescription glasses, referrals and eye care education to Charleston County students, mostly from Head Start and Child Development programs. Annually, the clinics serve approximately 1,500 students in 22 schools, 21 of which are Title I. A comprehensive eye exam for children not passing the initial screening is provided on site and, when indicated, ABVI provides free prescription glasses and/or referrals to a doctor for follow-up care.

“It’s been found that 80% of a child’s learning is visual, so it is important to address vision impairments at an early age before there is any interruption to the child’s educational career,” said Courtney Plotner, Executive Director for ABVI. “We are grateful to the J M Smith Foundation for recognizing the importance of our *Focus on Children* program, and the work we do to ensure that children are not placed at an academic disadvantage due to an undiagnosed vision problem.”

One of the core values of the J M Smith Corporation is giving back to, serving and improving the communities where they live and work. To learn more, about J M Smith Foundation, and the work it does in the community, visit: <https://www.jmsmithcorp.com/community>.

For more information on the *Focus on Children* program, or to view a short video featuring a local student and his story, [click here](#).



### **About Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired – Charleston**

The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired – Charleston’s mission is to empower individuals with blindness and visual impairment to lead safe, dignified, independent and rewarding lives and to prevent vision loss for adults in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties and children in Charleston County Title I schools. Founded in 1936, we have been serving the Tri-County area for over 80 years. We have three main programs supporting our mission: *Focus on Adults*, *Focus on Children* and *Own Your Life*. *Focus on Adults* and *Focus on Children* are preventative programs aimed at catching vision impairment in the early stages and restoring vision when possible. *Own Your Life* is geared towards helping our blind and visually impaired clients attain independence in their personal and professional lives. In addition, we provide guide dog scholarships for our clients as well as opportunities for social engagement.

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